

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the specification.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original). A method in a redemption system for determining which awards to redeem, the method comprising:

maintaining an award history database that includes award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, the type of award;

maintaining an encumbrance database that describes types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers;

receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards at a chosen supplier;

determining allowed awards that can be redeemed with the chosen supplier;

determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of allowed awards and the data in the encumbrance database; and

determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the encumbrance levels.

2. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on expiration dates of the allowed awards.

3. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on dates on which the allowed awards were earned.

4. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award includes according to which promotion the award was earned.

5. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award includes from which business the award was earned.

6. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award indicates black-out dates on which the award cannot be redeemed.

7. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award indicates a classification of the award.

8. (Currently amended). A method in a redemption system for determining which awards to redeem, the method comprising:

maintaining an award history database that includes award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and including, for each earned award, an expiration date, an earning date, and the type of award;

maintaining an encumbrance database that describes restrictions on redeeming types of awards;

receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards;

determining allowed awards that may be redeemed based on the expiration date and the types of awards; ~~and~~

determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the earning date; and

determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the encumbrance levels.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on the types of the allowed awards.

11. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the encumbrance database describes types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers;
wherein receiving a request to redeem further comprises receiving an indication of a chosen supplier at which to redeem the awards; and
wherein determining allowed awards is further based on the chosen supplier.

12. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award depends on the promotion with which the award was earned.

13. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award depends on the business with which the award was earned.

14. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award depends on black-out dates on which the award cannot be redeemed.

15. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award indicates a classification of the award.

16. (Currently amended). The method of claim 8 further comprising:
determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of allowed awards and the data in the encumbrance database;~~and~~
~~wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on the encumbrance levels.~~

17. (Previously presented). In a network promotion system, a system for determining which awards to redeem, the system comprising:

a first memory that stores award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, an expiration date and an earning date;

a second memory that stores information related to types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers;

a processor coupled to the first memory and the second memory and operable to perform the steps of:

receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards at a chosen supplier;

determining allowed awards that can be redeemed at the chosen supplier; and
determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of allowed awards and the data in the encumbrance database; and

determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the encumbrance levels.

18. (Original). The system of claim 17 wherein the first memory and the second memory are a common memory with storage areas for award transaction information and information related to types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers.

19. (Currently amended). In a network promotion system, a system for determining which awards to redeem, the system comprising:

an award history database that stores award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, an expiration date and an earning date;

an encumbrance database that describes restrictions on redeeming types of awards; and

a processor coupled to the award history database and the encumbrance database, and operable to perform the steps of:

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- A) receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards;
 - B) determining allowed awards that may be redeemed based on the expiration date;
 - C) determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the earning date;
- and
- D) determining allowed awards to redeem ~~further~~ based on encumbrance levels ~~the types of awards~~.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented). The system of claim 19 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on the types of the allowed awards.